THE
Friendly Monitor,
Laying open
THE CRYING SINS
OF
Curſing, Swearing, Drinking, Gaming, Detraction, and Luxury or Immodeſty.

Piouſly intended for Correcting the Errors of this Vicious Age; in which, under the Name of Chriſtian, Men live like Heathens.

In Five Short Diſcourſes, in which is ſhewn the Unreaſonableneſs and great Miſchiefs of theſe Vices, and ſome Means propoſed for their Cure.

LONDON.
Printed for *Sam. Crouch*, at the Corner of *Popes-head-Alley*, againſt the *Royal-Exchange*, 1692.

THE

Friendly Monitor,

Crying out

THE CRYING SINS

OF

Cursing, Swearing, Drinking, Gaming, Debauchery or Lasciviousness.

Plainly intended for Correcting the Errors of this Vicious Age; in which, under the Name of Christian, Men live like Heathens.

In Five Short Discourses, in which is shewn the Almost Total and great Alteration which is made Vice, and some Means proposed for their Cure.

2316:07

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Printed for Sam. Crouch, at the Corner of Peter-noster-Row, against the Royal-Exchange. 1691.

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OF

Cursing and Swearing,

and proposing

REMEDIES

For their

CURE.

of Men to walk on; but, behold, they have set you over their heads, admiring your Dust and Clay, enamour'd with your Filth and Corruption, and willingly venturing their Souls for the purchase of your Dross; but *Heaven* they have brought under their feet, and trample most prophanely on the most Holy *Name* of God, while they shew respect to you. For are they not come to that impiety, that having little regard to the Commandments, wherein they are strictly enjoyn'd *not to Take his Name in vain*; but taught, not to speak of him, but with all the Respect and Reverence possible, they lay aside all Religious Modesty and Shame, and not only make his Name *Common*, but vilely prostitute it to all their own vain, idle and wicked ends?

For where can a man turn, but his Ears are soon struck, too often on both sides, with horrid Swearing, rash Oaths, frightful Cursing and abominable Blasphemies; enough to make a man think, he's encompass'd rather with wicked Spirits and Fiends, than Men, who profess themselves Christians? Is it not with

with these Prophanations they give a Relish to their Sports and Entertainments? With these they set off their Jests and Narratives; these they mix with their Cups; with these they sanctifie their Debauches: With these they add terror to their Passions, power to their Commands, authority to their Quarrels; and if the very Horses and Dogs are not ready at the beck of their Humor, are not these made use of for *Spurs* and *Whips*? Heaven and Hell are immediately stirr'd up, and notwithstanding the *Great Gulf* that is betwixt them, they bring *God* and the *Devil* together in one breath.

This is an excellent Character now of a People, that pretends to *believe* in God and *love* him. He says expressly, *Thou shalt not prophane the Name of thy God*, Deut. 19. 12. and they spare not his Name even in the worst of prophanations; taking it often in their mouths, but to its dishonor; and dragging it into the Streets, to serve as the Mockery of their Passions, of their Excesses and Fury. Christ our Lord confirms this Command to all his Followers: *But I*

say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, nor by Earth; Matth. 5. 34. *neither by any other Oath*, as his Apostle adds, *Jam.* 5. 12. And they, like perverse and rebellious Children, mix their Oaths with all their discourses; swear by Heaven and Earth, and call in God, and all that is Sacred, to witness the Truth of their impertinent, idle, and often Lying Extravagancies.

And is not this a misery, that men should thus forget their Duty, contradict their Profession and so grievously offend their God? their God, whom the Angels adore, before whose Throne all the Heavenly Spirits fall down and worship, giving glory, and honour, and praise, to his Holy Name for ever and ever: He it is, these Men stand before without Reverence or awe, and so little think of Praising, that they are continually belching out against him Injuries and Contempts, under all the variety of Oaths and Swearing, that their Passion and Folly can suggest to them. So that however the Holy Scripture recommends to us, that we be ever mindful of our God, it were, in some manner,

ner to be wish'd, that these Scandalous Sinners would rather forget him, since they remember him so often, for no other end, than to Swear by him and Prophane his Name.

And how wretched an abuse is this of the Gifts of God! For why did he give man a Tongue and Speech, but to be the *Voice* of all other creatures, for himself and them to give Thanks and Praise, and in humble Prayers, to petition for relief in all his Necessities? And instead of this, these men have degraded themselves beneath all other creatures, taking part with the very Devils, and, in their language, dishonoring their God, and blaspheming the hand that made them.

Thus by their frequent Oaths and habitual Swearing they offend against the Lord of Heaven, and in proportion to the Crime committed against him, are likewise injurious to themselves. For first, is it not most evident, that by this detestable Vice, they shut the hand of the divine Bounty, and deprive themselves of that Fatherly Protection and those Heavenly Graces, with which

God is wont to assist and bless his Servants? For how can they expect his Gifts, who thus, at every turn, are so affronting to the Giver? Have they not rather reason to fear, they are cast off and forsaken by him, whom they have first thus wretchedly forsaken?

2. They make themselves incapable of saying their Prayers. For, with what face can they appear before the Lord, and ask him Favors, whom in their ordinary discourses they so vilify and contemn? How can they say *Our Father*, and salute him with that Title of love, whose Honor they trample under their feet, and to whom they shew no more respect, than is due to the worst of enemies? And when they say, *Hallow'd be thy Name*, must not their Consciences necessarily turn upon them? For how can they seriously pray, that his *Name* may be *Hallow'd*, that is, *Bless'd* and *Prais'd* by all Creatures, who make it their common practice to dishonor and prophane it? They, by their ungodly Speeches, are making it contemptible to the world, and then in their Prayers say *Hallow'd be thy Name*.

What

What greater Mockery can there be than this? Might not *Belshazzar* with as good reason, in his impious Banquet, Dan. 5. 2. have *pray'd* for the *hallowing* the Vessels of the Temple, when he brought them forth amongst his Wives and Concubines, and drank in them Praises to his Gods of Silver and Gods of Gold? Such a Prayer for *Sanctifying* those Vessels, whilst he was in the very act of *Prophaning* them, would have been the only way to outdo the devotions of our Swearing Christians, who pray, if they pray at all, that the *Name* of God may be *hallow'd*, and with their next breath prophane it amidst their Cups and Concubines; and if it be for their advantage to have it brought forth on the *Counter*, to gain credit to their false Protestations, scruple not by repeated Oaths, to sacrifice it to their Interest, to their Gods of Silver and Gods of Gold. Thus *Belshazzar*-like, with their impious lips they pollute that which is most Holy, and have no other possible excuse for being thus prophanely absurd and ridiculous, but only the ill Custom of a

Rash and Heedless Humor, by which as they *Swear*, so they *Pray* they *know not what*. But that *Hand*, which writ the fate of that Unhappy Prince, writes, no question, their Crimes and Destiny on every wall; and tho they, Blind and Obstinate Sinners, observe it not; yet it will, one day, be produc'd against them; and then, when in the Severity of the Punishment, they too late begin to see the weight of their Sins, what will follow, but repeated Cries of Despair, instead of Repentance? But Heaven will be then as Deaf to their Cries as they had been before to all its invitations to amendment.

But let us suspend their Sentence a little, while we view another part of their Crime, and that is the Sin of *Cursing*, which commonly hangs to the former; for *Swearing* and *Cursing* for the most part go together; and have this only difference, that *Swearers*, by dishonoring the Name of God, seem to disown and abandon him; but *Cursers* take a step more back still, and call on the Devil for help; so that, while, by the former Sin, they forsake God; by

the other, they go to the Devil. And this is most abominable in all its branches. For 1. if we consider those, who on slight and trivial occasions throw out *Curses* against *themselves*, at every turn calling for *Plagues*, the *Devil* and *Damnation* on their own heads, what greater Madness can there possibly be than this? To see men, who, besides being bound by the Law of Nature and of God, to preserve themselves, are otherwise so tender and nice, even to a Vice, that they cannot bear the least Inconvenience, the least Pain, Contradiction or Disappointment, but they presently become uneasy, impatient and passionate; to see these, I say, in their frequent Wishes, as it were, importunatly calling for the worst of *Torments* on themselves, wishing for *Hell-fire* and hourly *praying for* what they most *fear*, and for the *destruction* of that, which their whole concern is to *preserve*: What shall I say of them? but that the *Outrages* of *Bedlam* are *Reasonable* in comparison of their *Folly*: And that if they would but lay down *this Madness*, and take up *theirs*, 'twould

be

be no ungrateful Exchange to such of their True Friends, who would be more contented to see in them an *Innocent*, than a *Wicked* Frenzy. And however they may, think it more *Manly* and *Great* to play with *Hell-fire* and *Damnation*, than with *Straws*, *Paper* or *Ribbands*; yet certainly these are the more harmless, and I think no less becoming; since all the *Greatness*, that is in the former, is only like the Swelling of *Venemous Creatures*, which grow *big* indeed, but with nothing but *Poyson*.

2. If we look on these Sinners in regard of their *Neighbour*, they are of all the most Uncharitable; tho this indeed be no more than a Consequence of their former Crime: for they that are thus their own enemies, as to pray for the worst of evils on themselves, cannot be well expected to say better Prayers for their Neighbors. And therefore it is, on the least Provocation, you may hear them wishing for all the *Plagues*, *Devils* and *Damnation* on every one that stands in their way, that thwarts their humor, or appears in the least injurious to them. These are their *Seconds* call'd in, on all occasions

occaſions to revenge every affront offer'd to their Cravat-ſtring, Perriwig or Toes: ſo that a man muſt walk very cautiouſly to eſcape having the Devil let looſe at him ſome time in the day. For theſe men have him ſo ready in their mouths, that he ſeems to be kennel'd there, and the leaſt occaſion makes him fly out.

And this is an excellent ſort of Goſpel-Spirit now, which is as exact in obſerving the Precepts of Chriſt, as the worſt of Heathens could deſire. He ſays, *Love your Enemies*, Math. 5. 44. and a little thing ſerves to make them *Curſe their Friends.* He ſays, *Bleſs them that Curſe you*, and their Bleſſing is of *Plagues and Devils.* He ſays, *Do good to them that hate you*; and their good is, to wiſh them *confounded with Eternal Evils.* He ſays, *Pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you*, and their Prayer is a Hearty *Damn ye.* Thus they defeat the moſt fundamental Maxims of Chriſtianity, and make the enemies of the Goſpel blaſpheme the Holy Name, which they profeſs.

And is not this a moſt abominable and ſcandalous Practice, for men thus

to

to trample on that Law, which they pretend to follow, and, upon every provocation, to turn their anger againſt God? What mercy can they expect from him, whom they thus unworthily offend? And with what confuſion muſt they one day appear before him, whoſe Name they have ſo wickedly prophan'd, whoſe Honor they have expos'd to Scorn and Contempt, whoſe Commandments they have broken without remorſe? Will not then all their vain and raſh *Oaths*, their deteſtable *Curſes* riſe up in Judgment againſt them, and that *Damnation*, they have ſo often wiſh'd to others, fall to their own ſhare?

This, there's too much reaſon to fear, will be their unhappy lot, if they take not care to reform theſe Vices in time, and ſhake off theſe ill habits, before Death ſummons them to appear before their Lord. Will it not therefore be a labor well beſtow'd, if by ſincere endeavours and a ſeaſonable Repentance they ſtrive to prevent this doom of miſery? For my part, the Zeal I have for God's Honor, and the Compaſſion due to my Neighbors and Brethren in their

Souls

Souls distress, make me heartily desire they would turn their thoughts and endeavours this way. I wish 'twere in my power to contribute to this Common good: I dare not presume to direct; however, if I lay before them some Means, or Helps, I hope Christian Charity will be sufficient to excuse me.

I am very sensible, how difficult it is to overcome an *ill Habit*; and yet I am persuaded, there's no body, that sets himself seriously about this work, with the application due to so great an affair, but, by the Blessing of Heaven, will soon gain ground, and by degrees become entire Master of himself: But then,

1. He must not fail, in frequent and fervent Prayers, daily to beg the assistance of the Divine Grace, which is the only Remedy of all our evils, and without which all our endeavours will most certainly be fruitless. He must often, with *David*, cry out, *Make haste, O God, to deliver me, make haste to help me, O Lord*; Ps. 70. and as often beg, that the *Seraphim*, that touch'd the unclean lips of *Isaiah*, Isa. 6. 6. will with

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a Coal from the same Altar of God, touch his lips and mouth: and purge them from all iniquity.

2. As for Persons of Quality, who know what *Honor* is, and are very sensible of every thing that touches them in that point; ought not they to consider how unbecoming and unworthy it is in them, to frequently to dishonour him, from whom *all Honor* proceeds, and in their daily discourses to cast out so many indignities against the divine Majesty, which, if offer'd to their own Persons, they could not bear without rage? And as for others of a lower rank, 'tis not less unreasonable in them; since for Worms of the earth to be so often flying at the Infinit Majesty of God, is most arrogant and Intolerable. And may not a serious consideration of this be some check to this evil?

3. What if these Offenders would frame a lively Idea of those eternal flames, which are prepar'd as the Punishment of their crimes? and that this may make a due impression on their minds, what if they imagine, that for every *Rash Oath* or *Curse*, that comes

comes out of their mouths at present, they were to have a *burning Coal* laid on their *Tongues*, tho' for five minutes only; would not this, if 'twere to be really so, teach them to bridle their Tongues and soon fright away their ill Custom? And why should not the thoughts of Hell, with Rational men, work the same effect? They are generally careful to avoid and prevent Mischief; and why not that above all, which is Eternal?

4. Why should not every man set up a *Court of Justice* within his own *breast*, and as the Common-wealth has appointed certain *Penalties* for *Public Offenders*, so every one assign certain *Mulcts* or *Punishments* for every Notorious or Scandalous Sin, which they commit? And what if one, that is subject to *Swearing* &c would, for every Sin of this kind, fine himself, according to his ability two-pence, a groat, six-pence, &c. to be given to the Poor, or employ'd in any other Charitable use? Would not this, by degrees, make him more careful; and for the saving his Mony, oblige him to save his Soul?

Thus

Thus might every one, that is truly desirous to reform any ill Custom, find out Means to effect it. And 'tis but necessary this in particular should be seriously thought on, since, like a Contagious Distemper, it has over-run the greatest part of man-kind: 'tis this which is most Public and Scandalous, and by offending all pious ears of Little and Great, must necessarily draw after it the Punishment of many Mill-stones, and make it to have been better that such men had never been born, than thus under the Name of Christians, to have taken part with and liv'd like Heathens.

FINIS.

The next Sheet shall be *Of the Sin of Drunkenness.*

Printed for *Sam. Crouch* at the Corner of *Popes-head-Alley*, over against the *Royal-Exchange*, 1692.

THE Friendly Monitor. OF THE SIN OF DRUNKENNESS.

Drunkards excluded the Company of God's People, and from the Number of the Blessed. Sober Drunkards not much less Criminal than Sottish ones: Their Sins lay'd open, and Pretexts for such Drinking shew'd Unreasonable.

AN Antient Father says, *Drunkenness is a Devil*; how then can I better go about to lay this Evil Spirit, than with the *Word of God* in my Hand? *Basil.*

Hand? *Awake* therefore *ye Drunkards, and weep and howl all ye Drinkers of Wine*, Joel 1. 5. For, behold, the Lord of Hosts has pronounc'd *Wo's* against you, declar'd you miserable and wretched both here, and hereafter. He has set a *Mark* on you like *Cain*, and commanded his People to run from you as from a Pestilential Distemper: *Be not amongst Wine-bibers*, says he to them by *Solomon*; Prov. 23. 20. And by St. *Paul*, he enjoyns them, *not to keep Company with any Man that is* but *call'd a Drunkard*, 1 Cor. 5. 11. And he has expresly cut you off from the Inheritance of Eternal Life: *Be not* therefore *deceived*, says he, for neither *Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, shall inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Again he repeats this Decree, *The works of the Flesh are manifest, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, of the which I tell you, that they which do these things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, Gal. 5. 19, 21.

Thus you see your selves in plain terms rejected by the Almighty, and a Two-fold Sentence pass'd against you: *First*, whereby you are Condemn'd as unfit for the Company of his People. *Secondly*, whereby you are for ever excluded from

from the number of the Bleſſed. *Awake ye Drunkards, and weep and Howl all ye Drinkers of Wine.* We'll now enquire into the Reaſons of theſe Two Decrees, and, by this take a full view of the blackneſs of the Crime.

And Firſt, why the Servants of God are forbid the Company of ſuch as are ſubject to this Vice. We read in Scripture of the *Iſraelites* having a ſtrict charge given them not to mix with the *Canaanites*, nor the *Hittites*, or other People of the Land, but to avoid all Society with them; and the reaſon was, that thus declining their Company, they might be out of danger of being corrupted by them, and ſo continue Faithful to their God. The ſame without doubt is the reaſon why all good People are enjoyn'd not to company with Drunkards, becauſe their Vice as it is moſt Scandalous in it ſelf, ſo it is deſtructive of all Goodneſs; it takes off all *Modeſty* and *Shame*, which are the common Bars Nature has ſet up againſt Wickedneſs; it makes him that is Inſolent, Prouder; him that is Cruel, Fiercer; and irritates the Leacher, to the laying aſide all thoughts either in regard to Decency

or Scandal. 'Tis this which puts Families into Disorder, and draws on them Confusion and Ruin; it drowns Devotion, overthrows Religion, and like a Deluge carries away before it all Inclinations to Good. In fine, it extinguishes *Reason* in Man, and having taken away this his *Guide*, leaves him to the conduct of Blindness and Passion; so that as sometimes he becomes altogether Senseless, and like the Idols of the Gentiles, has Eyes and Sees not, Ears, and Hears not; at other times he puts on the Beast, and becomes more fierce and intractable than they; and if one should say, that upon occasion, a Man might with as much security meet the most furious Inhabitants of *Africk*, as with some sort of these Amphibious Domestick Animals; we have had too many sad Instances to confirm the Truth of it. History affords us one most remarkable in *Alexander*, who having Two Friends, *Clytus*, and *Lysimachus*, the one he expos'd to a Lion, the other to his *Drunken Self*; and while he that was turn'd loose to the Beast escap'd, the other fell a Sacrifice to the Fury of his Distemper'd Brain.

And

And while we see *this Vice* thus an open Enemy to Vertue, and wholly inconsistent with the manifold Duties of a Christian Life, we can have no reason to wonder why there is this strict charge given to Christians, of avoiding the Company of all such as are unfortunately corrupted with it; for if there be just reason to run from a Contagion, for fear of its Infection, there is much more reason to fly such Company, who are little better than so many Factors for Hell, who trade in Wickedness, and help to ruin Souls. For if the *Word of God* expresly commands Christians to live *Soberly*, ought not they to be avoided as Enemies to Christianity, whose Life is little better than a repeated *Intemperance*, and whose Company is a most certain encouragement to *Excess*? If the Word of God enjoyns us to live *Justly*, that is, to discharge *every Duty* incumbent on us, either in regard to *Family*, in supporting it; to *Children*, in seeing them duly Educated; to *Creditors*, in taking care that they be Satisfied; to the *Poor*, in relieving them with what we can Spare; to every *Neighbour*, in giving them good Example; ought not we to fly their Com-

pany, who for the indulging their own Sottish Humour, teach us to neglect these Fundamental Duties, who see their Family and Children wanting Necessaries, the Poor Bread, and their Creditors struggling under the weight of many Miseries, whilst they are playing the Good-Fellows amidst their Cups, and most wickedly throwing away that Mony with which they are bound to satisfie these Obligations belonging to their Estate? Thus they Drink away the Comfort of their neareſt Relations, Swallow down the Bread of the Distress'd, the Blood of Orphans and Widows, and find a way by lifting up their Hands, to bring as certain Confusion to themselves and Friends, as *Moses* did Destruction to his Enemies. And is it to be wonder'd now, why these are to be avoided by Christians, these, who, help to cast all Morality out of Doors, to make void all the Maxims of the Gospel, and bring amongst Men all that can be extravagant either of Folly or Madness?

And if on these and many other weighty Considerations, these Wet Christians are banish'd the Company of all that are Good, have we not much more reason

ſon to conclude, they'll be baniſh'd the Society of the Bleſſed for ever? For if their Crimes render them ſo black and deteſtable, that they are unfit for the Converſation of the Juſt on Earth, how can we think of their being admitted into Heaven, where nothing that is Defiled can enter? St. *Paul*, (as you have heard,) has ſaid it expreſly, that they ſhall *not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*: 'And S. *Auguſtin* declares them to be moſt 'deteſtable in the Sight of God; and 'though ſome may think *Drunkenneſs* to 'be a light Sin, yet that whoever lies 'under the guilt of it, and does not ſin-'cerely repent and amend, ſhall be moſt 'certainly caſt out with Adulterers, and 'Murderers, and have his Portion with 'them in everlaſting Flames.

And if we ſeriouſly conſider this matter, what diſpoſition can we find in them for the Life of the *Bleſſed*, who live here like *Swine*? Is the *Bottle* and the *Pipe* a Preparation for *Happineſs*? or are their Drunken and Filthy Songs, the way to tune their Souls for Allelujah's of Bliſs? Chriſt commands his Followers to *Deny themſelves*, and is this Leſſon ſooneſt learnt in Ale-houſes and Taverns? Is *Exceſs*

the way to *Temperance?* Is the *Losing thier Senses* and *Reason* the means to *put on Christ?* Is the humouring their Corrupt Appetites, the way to *Crucifie the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts?* Is Christ thus *to be formed in them?* Ah miserable mistaken Souls, that thus unhappily deceive themselves, who live in the open practice of Sin, are a Scandal to their Profession, neglect their manifold Duties, and are even Tutors in Evil! What can they expect of Mercy, who have thus slighted all the means of Salvation? Or how shall Heaven be given them, unless it be in reward of their Wickedness? No, *they shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Now what has here been said, is not to be understood only of such, as by excess of Drinking lose their Reason and Senses, but even of all those who give themselves up to a Habit of Drinking, spending whole Days, or a considerable part of them, amidst their Cups, though, through the strength of their Brain, the Drink makes not the least change in them: And therefore I must desire these stronget Heads, not to flatter themselves, as if Drinking were Innocent, as long as they

they find their Brains not distemper'd; for certainly, notwithstanding this keeping their Wits, their Consciences lie still open to the Guilt of most grievous Sins, in the manifold breach of their Duty.

And therefore, not insisting on the baseness of this Brutal Entertainment, which is only in the Service of the Senses, or to let them see how unmanly it is, to be ever Sipping, and dwell among Drink; how poor an Honour it is to Drink the Company Dead; how unbecoming a Vertue, to Swallow more Wine than the rest, that is, of the whole Company to be most like a Hogshead; I call their Thoughts at present to more weighty Considerations, and wish them to reflect how little better their case is, in regard to Christianity and Heaven, than the worst of Drunkards.

1. Let e'm remember, that however harmless they think this their Drinking Diversion to be, the *Word of God* gives it another Character, and shews its abhorrence, by pronouncing *Wo's* against them them that follow it: *Wo unto them that are Mighty to drink Wine, and Men of Strength to mingle Strong Drink*, Isa. 5. 22. Where 'tis not only those are condemn'd, who by their Intemperance forfeit their Reason,

Reason, but also such as preserve their Wits amidst their Excesses; their shewing their *Strength*, being here censur'd as a Weakness, and their *Ability* marked out as a Folly: So that however they may pride themselves as Men of Parts, and make sport of the Company that's fall'n under the weight of their Liquor, Heaven is here pronouncing Woes against them; sentences them to Miseries, and declares them the object of its Wrath.

2. If they take an exact survey of their Consciences, and make a Catalogue of their Sins, for which they must be accountable at the last day, I apprehend the difference between them and the most Sottish Drunkards, will not be very considerable: For 1. They must give an account of the waste of God's *Creatures*; all that Drink which is beyond a *Moderate Refreshment*, being a most certain Abuse, and contrary to the *End* for which 'twas intended by the Providence of God. 2. Of the *Waste of Time*, whilst those Hours which ought to have been employ'd in the discharge of the many Obligations annexed to every state, have been mis-spent in Idleness; and when they should have been working out their Salvation in the Pious

Exercises

Exercises of a Christian Life, have been indulging their Passions, and taken as many Steps towards Hell, as they have drunk away Hours, which were given them for a better end. 3. Of the *Waste of Mony*, the expence of their Intemperance; and this if we consider the many legions of Sins that follow at the Heels of it, is in too many a Sin of the first Magnitude, and I fear of a very Damning Complexion. For how can those Men answer it, who let their Estates run out at the Tap? God has blessed them with a plentiful or at least sufficient being, and they are set over it as *Stewards*, by a prudent management, to Husband it for the good of their Family and poor Relations, or for the benefit of the Publick; and instead of this care to improve and dispose of it for its due ends, they prodigally waste and destroy it to feed their own corrupt Appetites and Vices. What will they say, when the Lord of all shall summon them to appear, when he shall command them to give an account of their Stewardship, an account of all the Mony they have thus spent, of the Estates they have ruin'd, of the Family they have brought to misery, if not downright want and beggary? These may go on thus

Drinking,

Drinking, and call it by the ſoft Names of *Diverſion*, or *ſpending an Hour with a Friend*; but 'tis certain their employment is nothing better than Sacrificing to Idols; and however they may call themſelves Chriſtians, the Scripture ſays what Chriſtians they are, a ſort that are *worſe than Heathens*. 4. If they conſider how much they impair their Health by their Drinking, how many Diſtempers they bring on themſelves, and often become their own Murderers; if they add to this the many Sins of their Companions, who by their Example are drawn into Drink; for though they eſcape being Drunk themſelves, are not they to anſwer for Criminal Exceſſes of all thoſe who by their Authority or Company, were encouraged thus to make Beaſts of themſelves; as likewiſe for all the misfortunes of their Families, which from hence often take their riſe? And this Crime is much blacker again in ſuch, as knowing the ſtrength of their own Brains, ſet purpoſely to make others Drunk, accounting it their Victory to ſee others fall at their Feet: And is not this a barbarous Triumph, to rejoyce in the crimes of their Neighbours; firſt to betray them to a moſt grievous Sin, and then

then to make Sport of their Weakneſs? This is nothing better, than offering their Companions a Sacrifice to the Devil; and whenſoever they go about it, they ought to change their Phraſe, and inſtead of the Invitation of *Come, will you drink a Bottle?* they ought to ſpeak plain, and ſay, *Come, will you go Sacrifice to Hell?*

Thus 'tis evident how their Sins will riſe upon the enquiry; eſpecially if we add again to theſe, the many Lewd, Prophane and Irreligious Diſcourſes, occaſion'd by this Drinking, and other Abominations too frequent in theſe Entertainments, which if they were to be all writ on thoſe Walls betwixt which they are acted, would make too long and ſhameful a Liſt. And what a poor ſatisfaction muſt it then be to Men, tho they be not often Drunk themſelves, to find ſo many Crimes lie at their Door? Can they poſſibly think themſelves Innocent, who thus live almoſt buried in Sin? Or what favour can they expect from him, who is the juſt Avenger of all Iniquity? Is it likely, that Life Eternal will be their Inheritance; or with the worſt of Drunkards to be caſt out into utter Darkneſs?

Neither can the *one* ſort of Drinkers, or

or the *other*, be able to justifie themselves, notwithstanding all those specious pretexts with which they please their own Fancies, and encourage themselves in this Sin. For 1. If the end they pretend to Drink for, be *Company* or *Good-Fellowship*, is not this most unchristian, while they see so many Sins before them? Is not this to leave God for the sake of Men? Is it not to joyn with others in offending God? Might not these, with as good reason Drink Poyson, or go to Hell for Company? 2. If it be to *make Merry*, is it not a great Madness to make a Pastime of that which is the ruin of a Mans Reason, his Estate, Family and Soul? A Man in a Phrenzy might make a Bonfire of all he is worth, and Merrily Drink it to Ashes: But for Men of Reason to do it, unless they find a way to be Drunk before they Drink, is not easily to be imagin'd. 3. If it be for the *putting away Cares*; this is little better than renouncing all Religion and Gospel; for there Christ invites all such to him; *Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy loaden, and I will refresh you*; but these Men turning their Back on Christ, seek this refreshment in the Bottle, and expect that from a little Drink, which is

to

to be found no where truly but in God. Ah poor Christians! and what a Deceitful Comfort is this, which only stifles your Cares, but does not cure them! It heaps on you daily new Miseries, and by your abandoning God, makes your Temporal Affliction become Eternal; that is, instead of giving Relief, makes it to be without end. 4. *If it be for the passing time away*; this is a most shameful Reproach to those that make this Plea, since there is no Man but what has or ought to have something better than this vile Imployment. How many things are there, that may be done for the benefit of our selves or the Publick? How many sorts of Study that are both Profitable and Ornamental? How great a work in the Mastering our Passions, and Regulating our Spiritual affairs? So that whoever duly considers his own condition, need never complain for want of business. And here I cannot but desire our *City*, but chiefly the *Country-Gentry*, to reflect how unbecoming, nay, how scandalous a thing it is, that Persons whom God has enabled with Riches, with Leisure and with Parts, and given them the opportunity of doing good in their Generations, to become eminent in their Families and Neighbourhood, and an honour to their Country, should so lay aside all thoughts of Honour and Goodness, as to give themselves up to this unmanly entertainment of Drinking, pass their whole time in adjourning from one *Good House* to another, and have little better Discourse, than *Where the best Wine is? How well they were entertain'd the other Day; and where they shall meet to Morrow?* So that whoever intends to live Soberly, must necessarily avoid their Acquaintance; and for to ruin a good Estate, Family, Health, Brain and Soul, a Man need seek no better Instructors than they. This is a point worthy of their most serious consideration, and if every one would

would undertake to reform one, they would deservedly be stil'd the true Fathers of their Families, and Promoters of the Publick Good. 5. As for such as pretend to Drink upon the account of *striking up a Bargain*, there may be Circumstances as the the World goes, that may plead for the Reasonableness of this Custom; but then it must ever be with a due regard to Temperance; for when Men on this pretext fall into Excess themselves, or design to over-reach their Neighbour, when soften'd with Drink, they'l prove I fear at the end but ill Traders, whilst for such petty Satisfaction or Gain, they evidently runt he hazard of Eternity. Now if besides these, there are others who dare not live more Sober than their Neighbours, for fear of being *Reproach'd*, these are a Cowardly sort of Christians, who cannot bear a Reproach for Christs sake: And how will they bear one day, being denied by Christ, whom they have first denied? for he will most certainly be asham'd of them, as they have been of him.

Here then I desire all Christians to reflect on the Unreasonableness and ill consequence of this Swinish Vice, and for such as have been guilty of it, to enter upon serious and firm Resolutions of amendment. They must expect no small difficulties in this Undertaking; but however, if they once become so Couragious as to reject all Temptations to this Sin in the beginning, and permit not themselves to venture into the Company of Good-Fellows, they'll soon be Masters of themselves, and remove that Bar which otherwise would have kept them out of Heaven.

FINIS.

The next Sheet shall be *of Gaming*.

Printed for *Sam. Crouch*, at the Corner of *Popes-head-Alley*, over against the *Royal-Exchange*, 1692.

THE Friendly Monitor. OF GAMING.

Recreation neceſſary, but eaſily abus'd, even by Good Men. Gameſters ought not to make their Diverſion a Buſineſs. *The great Miſchiefs of Immoderate Gaming. Playing at Cards, &c. on Sundays, Scandalous.*

IT would be very Unreaſonable to paſs the ſame Cenſure againſt *Gaming*, as we have done in the Two former Papers againſt *Curſing* and *Drunkenneſs*; for theſe are ſo *Evil* in themſelves, that 'tis not eaſie to find

ſuch *Circumſtances* as can take off their Guilt, and excuſe them from being highly Criminal: Whereas *Gaming* in it ſelf is Innocent, and the only Evil it has, is in the *Abuſe* of it. So that it cannot be our buſineſs at preſent, abſolutely to Condemn it, but rather to lay down ſuch Cautions as may be neceſſary for the keeping it within its due bounds, and preventing ſuch *Abuſes* into which Man's Weakneſs is too apt to lead him, whilſt it runs him beyond thoſe *Ends* for which 'twas intended.

We need not doubt therefore in the firſt place to ſay, that *Recreations* are in their kind neceſſary; for ſince neither our Minds nor Bodies are able to endure a conſtant toil or application to Buſineſs, without ſome convenient intervals of Diverſion or Refreſhment, we are hence oblig'd ſo far to give them breath and eaſe, as may fit them for the carrying on their greater Duties with new vigor and life. And becauſe all ſort of *Lawful Games*, are in their kind ſerviceable for the giving us this Refreſhment, hence they become not only warrantable, but may be in ſome manner neceſſary, if attended with all their due circumſtances, as to Time, Place, Perſons,

Persons, Business, &c. But because Man is too prone to abuse the best of things, and work Mischief to himself out of that which was design'd for his Good, and this being the case too frequently of *Recreation* or *Games*, not only in respect of Ill Men, but of Persons otherwise exemplar and good, 'twill be very justifiable, if I point at some *Conditions* necessary to be observ'd by all those well inclin'd Persons who are desirous to prevent these Mischiefs and Abuses in themselves or others.

Having therefore suppos'd, that no sort of Games ought to be us'd for Recreation, but such as are *Lawful*, it being most unbecoming the Name of Christian, for Men to take pleasure in that which is dishonorable to God, or injurious to their Neighbour; and most unreasonable to place their Diversion in what will one day prove their Rack and Torment: As to all *Lawful Games*, care ought to be taken.

1. That they be used so far only, as they may reasonably serve to recreate and divert the Mind, and fit it for Business, but not to make a *Business* of them. Hence those are very much to blame, who set their Affections so much on any sort of Game, as to be ever solicitous and con-

triving how they may enjoy this Satisfaction, who put by other affairs of Concern, and make them yield to this; and when any thing happens so obstinately cross to their Designs, that it will not be put by, fail not to disturb and vex themselves, and are out of Humour with all they Converse with. These I say, and all others of this kind, are very much to blame, since they shew their Affections to be misplac'd, and their Heart to be corrupt and disorder'd.

For as to that rank of Men in the first place, whose Livelihood depends on their own Industry, and on the careful management of their affairs; is it not evident, that by thus setting their Affections too earnestly on Gaming, they become at length careless of their Business, lose many advantageous Opportunities, commit their Concerns to the discretion and care of *Servants*, who too often take after their Master, and can't tell why they should be more mindful of his Business, than he is of his own; till by degrees, Trade failing, and the Expence encreasing, all falls to ruin, and they who with moderate care might have liv'd comfortably, are forc'd through their ill management, to take

take a dishonourable shelter, help to undo their Creditors, live Viciously, and at the end die Miserably; tho too often they live long enough to see their Children reduc'd to an honourable Slavery, and some of them, 'tis likely, who have not courage to submit to their Condition, exposing themselves, and taking ill Courses, as their defence against Want and Misery, which seems too evidently to threaten them. There are too many Families, God knows, that owe their Ruin to this Intemperance of Gaming; and too many are brought to the *High-way* and the *Stews*, to seek for that Bread, which *Gaming* took out of their Mouths: And if Masters of Estates, and Fathers of Families could but take a true Survey of but half the Mischiefs that are occasion'd by this Vicious Excess, they would be very jealous of giving themselves any liberty in this kind, and careful not to let their *Recreation* become their *Business*.

Hence it may be easily concluded to be a thing of dangerous consequence, to permit *Gaming* in *Servants* or *Younger People* of either Sex; for however innocent it may be, to take the Diversion of an Hour at leisure time with a Friend; yet,

when under this pretext of Recreation, the love of any Game begins to ſteal upon them, and they become fond and earneſt for it, is it not to be fear'd, that it will inſenſibly grow into a Cuſtom? And then, how often happens it, that what thus crept upon them in their tender Age, gains ſtrength with their Years; and what was their *Paſtime* in their *Youth*, becomes their *Buſineſs* in their *Riper State*? And is it not hence, that a great deal of irregularity and ill Husbandry takes its riſe; that having now Families and Concerns of their own to manage, this ill Cuſtom gets the better of all; Play is preferr'd before Duty; thoſe that have Eſtates, run them out by degrees, and thoſe that have none, having labour'd many Days for a little ſupport for themſelves and their Family, upon a little Temptation, play it all away in an Hour? Is not this the Miſery and Madneſs we ſee too often in thoſe of a meaner Condition, where the Man fails not to take true pains all the Week, and when on Saturday Night the Good Woman is waiting for the return of her Mate, to bring home a Supply to keep the Pot going, behold he, Good Fellow, has call'd in by the way, and

and resolving to take the refreshment of one *Game* and a *Tankard*, comes soon to the end of his Pay, and then goes jogging Home with the end of an old Tune to his Wife, and on this and her Credit she is to feed on all the Week, with the slender hopes of next Saturdays bringing a better Return. From this Ill Husbandry it is, those of this lower Sphere are over-run with Misery and Want; hence arise many and lasting discontents within Doors, the Woman is fretful and peevish, the Good Man seeks for Peace abroad, and spends amongst his Companions, what should Feed his Family: And in the mean time the Children grow up, but like so many little Bears, without Care or Education, and help to fill the World not with Men but Brutes.

But 2*dly*, As to those of a higher rank, whose Fortune is made to their Hands, they are likewise much to blame, if they give themselves the liberty of excessive Gaming: For tho their plentiful Estate excuses them from labouring for Bread, yet is it not an unpardonable Ingratitude in them, to make no better Return to Heaven for this Blessing? God has encompass'd them with Good things, and whilst

they behold others on every ſide toiling for neceſſaries, they ſit in the midſt of Plenty and Eaſe; and ſhould not that *Leiſure* and *Time* he has given them, be better imploy'd than in *Gaming?* It ought to be their care certainly to be able to give an account of the *Talents* entruſted with them, and ſo to improve their *Time*, as to be as much above their Neighbours in *Vertue* and all Chriſtian accompliſhments, as they are in *Eſtate*. But inſtead of thus commendably advancing themſelves, to ſee them ſotting it over a Bottle, and daily throwing away ſo many leiſure Hours in no better imployment than of *Cards* and *Dice*, is ſo unbecoming a Crime, that as it little ſuits with their Quality, and argues them to have but *Narrow Souls*, which are thus delighted in ſuch petty Diverſions; ſo it is diſagreeable to all the Maxims of Piety and Religion; and no queſtion but he whoſe daily toil has been at the *Plow* or the *Spade*, ſhall at the laſt day be found to have been better imploy'd than they. Would it not therefore be much more becoming their Condition, to apply themſelves to ſome more *Honourable Exerciſe* than this, to take delight in Beautifying their

their Minds with the Knowledge of such things as might benefit both themselves and their Country; and, if they must divert themselves for an hour, to take care they make not this Diversion their Business: Since these also, like those of a lower degree, having their Thoughts thus ill taken up, are too often brought to neglect their Concerns, cause great Discontents at home, play away the Comfort and Support of their Families, and leaving their Children without due Education, or Fortune answerable to their Quality, entail on them a certain Inheritance of Confusion and Misery to many Generations.

Now whilst these are very often the dismal effects of this Excess, 'tis but too evident how necessary it is, in all Gaming, to observe this Caution, of not letting it seize on the Affections so much, as to grow into the Seriousness of Business. But because there are many others, who keep that due guard on themselves, as to be out of danger of drawing any of these extravagant Evils on their Families, and therefore think themselves, in all their Gaming, to be without Reproof. I must here put these in mind, that notwith-

withſtanding this their Care and Command of themſelves, they may yet incur a manifold Guilt, ſufficient to ſully that Innocence, which, they think, accompanies them in all their Diverſions; and therefore, on their account, I here add another Condition they ought to have regard to, that is,

2. That in all their Gaming they ought to have that Care and Moderation, as not to occaſion any *Diſorder* in the Family where they play. To apprehend this Caution aright, 'tis neceſſary to reflect, that every *Regular Family* has ſet hours of *Eating*, of *Praying*, of *Sleeping*, &c. and that a *conſiderable Good* of the Family depends on this *Diſcipline*, and due Obſervation of this Order; for that every Family is a kind of little Republick within Doors; and that as he muſt neceſſarily be look'd on as an Enemy to the Commonwealth, who, to ſatisfie his own private Humour, brings Diſorder and Confuſion into the Government: So can he be no other than the Overthrower or Enemy of a Family, who, to pleaſe himſelf, takes no care what Diſorders he occaſions in it; and by this means brings it in ſome manner to reſemble Hell it ſelf; one part of the

the Deſcription of which place is, that it is *without Order*.

But this is not the utmoſt extent of this Evil; for beſides the diſcompoſing a Family, I apprehend 'tis often attended with very conſiderable Miſchiefs, and ſuch as is ſeldom in their Power to remedy, who thus indiſcreetly give the occaſion. And therefore, however theſe Perſons, it may be otherwiſe Religious and Juſt, ſcruple not at all the *Practice* of ſitting at Friends Houſes till Ten, Eleven or Twelve a Clock at Night at *Cards*, *&c.* but go home after this, flattering themſelves, and ſaying, *What Evil have we done? We have ſpent an hour in diverting our ſelves and our Friends: We have hazarded nothing more than we can well ſpare: We have wronged no body; We have not fallen into Paſſion, neither curs'd nor ſwore, nor committed any Exceſs; and where's the harm of all this?* Thus they may ſtate their own Caſe, and pleaſe themſelves with the fair proſpect of ſo much Innocence: Yet if the true ſtate of their Affairs were to be laid before them, I fear they muſt begin their reckoning again, and will find, that inſtead of ſo much Innocence, they have often the Guilt to anſwer for of tranſgreſſing all the Commandments.

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I know they are ready to ask me, Where is the *Theft*, *Murder* and *Adultery*, *&c.* in playing a Game at Cards? And I anſwer, If they find themſelves clear in their own Conſciences, I have nothing to ſay againſt them, as to their own *Perſons*: But then let them tell me, whether they have none of theſe, or ſuch like Sins, to anſwer for, in their *Servants*? Theſe ſee their Maſters ſpend, almoſt daily, ſo many hours in Gaming, and are not ſenſible of any harm in their doing the like; hence by degrees they grow in love with Play, and having ſo many opportunities of Practiſing, become as they think, Maſters of the Art; ſo far, till at length they grow ill Husbands, Drinkers, Gameſters, Extravagant, and fall into all ſort of Vice: Now ſhall none of all this lie at their Maſters Door, who by their *Ill Hours* and *Immoderate Diverſions*, have given their Servants ſuch frequent *Occaſions* of *Idleneſs*, and train'd them up in a method, fit for the learning all manner of Wickedneſs?

But theſe Evils, it may be, come behind at ſo great a diſtance, that they may hope the Guilt falls not much on them: Let them look therefore on every Nights Work,

Work, and see whether nothing of this happens, for which they must be, in part, accountable. The Masters are engag'd at their Game till late at Night; the Servants, who 'tis likely were well employed at their *usual Hours*, now when these are past, have nothing to do; they meet together, and, if there be but one bad amongst them, he sets them on some idle Discourse, every one takes their turn in telling their Masters Faults, they defame their Neighbours, repeat wicked Passages; and often immodest Stories and filthy Songs here take their place; here they teach and encourage one another in evil, and those who brought with them pure and innocent Minds, soon find them corrupted: And who now must answer for the Transgressions of this Assembly? They must every one, 'tis true, hold up their Hands for themselves; but shall not the *Masters* too be brought in as *Promoters* and *Encouragers*, who by their *ill Hours* lay before their Servants the *occasions* of these Evils? Of these, I say, and often more than these: For when Servants have thus contracted a Familiarity, and finding Sleep now draw on with the Night, they grow weary of this Entertainment, the

Meeting

Meeting is broke up by degrees, one lies down on a Bench, others retire into this Corner, others into that; and can any one tell me, whether the ill consequences of this Privacy and Retirement, may not be much more pernicious than what was acted in Publick. Thus may this *Innocent Gaming* be easily attended with the blackest of Crimes; and those *Masters*, who pass under the Character of *Just* and *Good*, have Sins to answer for against all the Commandments, for not keeping due *Order* in their Diversions.

Since therefore there will be some *Gaming*, let him be *my Man*, who considers *how much* he may venture, and will play for *no more*; who thinks how *much time* may be proper for a reasonable Diversion, without giving any *Disturbance* to the Family of his Friend or his own; and when that is expir'd, whether Winner or Loser, goes his way. And for the *Master of a Family*, let him be the *Man*, who, Brave as a Christian ought to be, sees this Order duly kept in his House; who is Civil to his Friends, but Just to his Family; lets them know his Hours, and yields not from his Duty, in Complement to any ones Weakness; for this he can't do, without another Weakness as great as theirs.

3. A Third Condition to be observ'd by those that Game at *Cards* or *Dice* is, *That they Play not on Sundays*: This is added for the sake of some Persons, who I am told, scruple not thus to divert themselves on the Lord's Day, being of Opinion, there's no more guilt in *this*, than in any other sort of Harmless Diversion, such as *Walking* or *Discoursing*. I meddle not here with the Lawfulness of the thing in it self, but one thing I with

with all assurance declare, that this sort of Recreation of *Cards*, &c. on *Sundays*, is what gives great *Scandal* to others: And I think every good Christian ought to have that Tenderness towards his Neighbour, as not to give him occasion of Offence on those days on which all things ought most particularly to be done to Edification. I know their Plea is, That if their Neighbour be Scandaliz'd at this, it proceeds from his *Weakness*, and not from any just occasion given by them; and therefore, if there be any Fault, 'tis *his* and not *theirs*. I answer, were the case really thus, is it not still a great Christian Duty in matters of this nature, which no *Necessity* or *Obligation* presses, to have regard to the *Weakness* of our Brother? St. *Paul* was so cautious and tender in a case like this, that he solemnly declares, If he saw his Brother thro' *want of Knowledge* or *Weakness*, offended at his eating of such Meat, which he *lawfully* might, yet on this consideration, *I will eat no Flesh*, says he, *while the World standeth*, 1 Cor. 8.13. For this reason, while he shews it to be no Sin to eat Meat offer'd to Idols, at the same time he desires the Faithful to *take heed lest by any means they abuse this Liberty, and become a Stumbling-block to them that are weak*, v. 9. For that by *sinning against the Brethren, and wounding their weak Conscience, they sin against Christ*, v. 12. If therefore *Playing at Cards on Sundays*, were as *lawful* as these Men pretend, yet ought they to take heed, *not to abuse this Liberty*, to the offence of those Brethren, whose weak Consciences are wounded by this Diversion; and by this Moderation, prevent that Scandal, which they otherwise bring on their Church and Religion.

Secondly, If they must have Diversion on these Days, why such an one as is so *dangerous* and subject to so many *Abuses*, which even the Pious and Discreet have difficulty enough to use with Moderation, but too often fall into *Excess*, either as to the length of *Time*, or of *Heat* and *Passion*, *Contesting*, *Swearing*, *Covetousness*

Covetousness, &c. And if there be any that can govern themselves as to these Points, yet don't they by their Example encourage others at least to Play, who cannot? And is this a good Sunday-work?

Thirdly, How does this Diversion agree with the Precept? God commands this Day to be *kept Holy*; and these Men spend a considerable part of it at Cards. What sort of *Christian Holiness* is there in this? This Game would be a *Prophanation* of a *Holy Place*, how comes it to be a means of *Sanctifying* a *Holy Day*? Methinks since God has reserv'd but *One* Day of the *Seven* to himself, it might be much better imploy'd; especially too, since every Christian besides Praising and Adoring his Maker, has the great works of his Soul and Eternity to be done on that Day: The works of calling himself to an account, enquiring into the state of his Soul, mastering his Passions, regulating his Affections, repenting of his Sins, preparing for Death and Judgment, Reading, Instructing and Catechising those under his Charge, whether Children, Servants, *&c.* These may very well serve for a full employment for *One day* in the Week; and those that find then time to *Play at Cards*, I fear know not the great work they have to do, or at least leave it undone.

There are some other Conditions I would have set down, but I think they may be reduced to these; and I cannot but hope, if Christians would be exact in the observance of these mention'd, Inconveniences and Evils might be avoided, which are too common amongst Gamesters, and Men would find a way to give themselves a just Diversion, without entrenching on their Greater Duties, and Playing away all Religion and Christianity.

The next shall be *Of the Sin of Detraction.*

Printed for *Sam. Crouch*, at the Corner of *Popes-head-Alley*, over against the *Royal-Exchange*, 1692.

THE
Friendly Monitor.
Of the SIN of
DETRACTION.

Speaking ill of our Neighbour *a Sin against Charity, against the Law of Nature, against Juſtice, Fidelity and Truth. Too frequent in the Converſation of both Sexes. Some Directions on this Subject.*

BY *Detraction* I underſtand that Sin, by which Men leſſen and impair the Credit of their Neighbour, either by Whiſperings, by Falſe Reports, Stories taken up upon truſt, weak Surmizes, and even the

discovering of such Truths, as betray his Infirmities, and evidently prejudice his Reputation. Now this being a Sin, which has over-run the greatest part of Mankind, and invaded the Tongues even of those, who amongst Men, bear the Character of *Good*, *Pious* and *Just*, I think 'tis but reasonable, it should be expos'd in its Colours, that so the Foulness and Malignity of it being laid open, it may be detested by the Good, and excluded the Conversation of all those, who look towards Heaven, and think of having a part in the Resurrection of the Just.

For this end we need only consider, that *Speaking to the discredit of others*, is a Sin, not level'd only against some Branch of the Commandments, but even against one of those main *Pillars*, on which the whole Law depends, that is, the *Love we owe our Neighbours*: And whilst it overthrows this, it likewise undermines the other; since he that *loves not his Neighbour*, deceives himself, if he thinks he *loves God*: So that, tho it be but a short, yet 'tis a clear Case, that *He that speaks evil of others*, has neither the *Love of God*, nor of his *Neighbour* in his Heart. And what a Christian must he be, who thus, in one

Act,

Act, tramples on the whole Law of God, and leaves his Soul void of all Spiritual Life? The Life of Charity, I mean, which is the *Bond of Perfectneſs, and the end of the Commandments*, and without which God can neither abide in us, nor we in him.

'Tis not therefore ſufficient for a Chriſtian to preſerve himſelf from thoſe more notorious and infamous Crimes, of Idolatry, Drunkenneſs, Fornication, Stealing, *&c.* but from this of *Detraction* and *Backbiting* too: For however this be not altogether ſo ſcandalous, and of ſo black a Complexion in the Eyes of Men, as the former; yet 'tis equally deſtructive in it ſelf, of all Goodneſs, as deteſtable in the ſight of God, and as certainly damns thoſe that are guilty of it, as any of the reſt; for 'tis the Spirit of God has ſaid it by St. *Paul*, That not only *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Drunkards, &c.* but *Revilers* alſo *ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

Is it not therefore a Caution indiſpenſably neceſſary for all that profeſs Chriſtianity, to look ſomething beyond that narrow Scheme of *Holineſs*, which the Phariſee in the Goſpel fram'd to himſelf, and went home contented? For what if,

like him, they are not Extortioners, nor Unjuſt, nor Adulterers? What if they Faſt and Pray, and give Alms? Will not all this come far ſhort of Heaven, if with him over-looking their own Faults, they ſeverely *cenſure* and *condemn* their Neighbour? Will Faſting and Praying take off the guilt from this uncharitableneſs? Or will *not being an Extortioner*, or an *Adulterer*, make *Detraction* Innocent? No, this one Sin is ſufficient to pollute the pureſt Soul; it renders even the beſt of Chriſtian Exercíſes fruitleſs; and though there be an exact compliance with all other Duties, yet is not all this ſufficient to prevent the diſmal effects of this Vice. For tho' a Man ſhould have all Faith, ſo as to remove Mountains, and have no Charity, he is nothing: Tho he beſtows all his Goods, and feeds the Poor; tho he gives his Body to be burnt, and has not Charity, it profits him nothing.

Thus ſtands it then with this Vice of *Back-biting*, *Reviling*, and *ſpeaking ill of others*, in regard of God and Eternity; for whilſt it diveſts a Man of the Wedding Garment of *Charity*, it certainly marks him out for one whoſe unavoidable Fate will be, to be caſt forth into utter Darkneſs.

Darkneſs. And if we conſider it now a little more particular in it ſelf, we ſhall ſtill diſcover the unreaſonableneſs of it, and other Motives to deteſt it.

For 1. Is not this a Sin directly oppoſit to that Principle of Nature, of *doing as we would be done by*? Let but any one examin his own Heart, and ſee how he is affected, when he hears of any that makes Reflections on his Words or Actions, or reports ſuch things, as any ways ſeem to prejudice his Reputation. Does not this touch a Man to the quick, raiſe a diſturbance within him, and often ſtir up ſo much Gall and Bitterneſs, that with ſome Tempers, 'tis not in the power of Time or Friends to make them think well of ſuch Perſons any more? A *Good Name*, *Credit* and *Reputation* are tender things, and there's no touching them ſo lightly, but we are preſently ſenſible, and often think our ſelves deeply wounded even with a Glance, that elſewhere would not be enough to race the Skin.

And is it not then a ſtrange ſort of an unnatural Crime in Men, to make their Neighbours Faults the common Subject of their Entertainment, to be ſporting with ſuch Diſcourſes as blemiſh and of-

ten wound their Reputation; whereas if the Scale were but turn'd, and their Neighbours were but doing the like of them, they would not bear it without Indignation; their preſent Smiles would be changed into Frowns, and they that make it a Paſtime in commenting on the Failings of others, would find it to be quite otherwiſe, when their own Faults were call'd over? Muſt not therefore thoſe Perſons, who accuſtom themſelves to this ſort of Vice be of a very unthinking Temper, ill-natur'd, inconſiderate and raſh, who thus deal with their Neighbour, ſo far otherwiſe, than they would be done by?

2*ly*. 'Tis a Vice contrary to Juſtice, Fidelity and Truth. For I think 'tis a thing not to be denied, that ſuch as are forward in medling with their Neighbours Concerns, and diſcourſing of their Overſights and Imperfections, very often relate ſuch things for Truths, which are not ſo. They take up Paſſages upon *Hear-ſays* and *Reports*, and then tell them for *Certainties*; whereas there's nothing more certain, than that the greateſt parts of thoſe Reports are uncertain. Let but any Man reflect on what has happen'd to himſelf in this

this kind, of the many Miſtakes he has obſerved in himſelf and others; and if his experience be any thing anſwerable to mine, I think he may, without raſhneſs, venture a conſiderable Wager, that of all the Stories he hears relating to Third Perſons, there's not One in Ten exactly according to Truth. 'Tis but ſounding a thing to the bottom, and we ſhall ſeldom fail of finding more or leſs than what is told. Paſſion and Prejudice often creep in and diſguiſe the Truth; ſome make Additions out of a vicious Habit, and having undertaken to relate a Paſſage, help it out with the laying on of ſuch Colours and Circumſtances, as may make it grateful to the Company, and worth their hearing; ſo that they ſcruple not to venture their Neighbours Credit, for the gaining themſelves a little Applauſe, or the raiſing a Smile or Surprize in thoſe they entertain. How often is it, that Men mix their own *Conſtructions* and *Comments* with thoſe matters of *Fact* they undertake to relate; and then another that is not very diſcerning, runs away with the *Whole*, and tells it to the next Company for the exact Truth, and nothing but the Truth? And are there not many, who pretend to inform you of *what ſuch an one ſaid at*

such a time; of what hapned betwixt such a Man and his Wife, Children, Servants, &c. And whilst they give you the assurance of telling you nothing, upon their Words, but what they heard and saw, leave out the particular *Circumstances* or *Occasions* of what was said or done, and make the thing as unlike what it was in it self, as if they had fram'd it all in their own Heads? Thus, whether by Mistake, Inadvertency, or on purpose, there are but few Passages come to us, but they are first disguis'd or corrupted some of these ways; especially if they come by Second and Third Hands; for then certainly, like Waters that run through Minerals, they receive a Tincture, according to the *Affection, Vanity, Weakness* or *Lightness* of the Parties, that help'd to convey them to us.

And while Matters stand thus, do not all those deal very unjustly with their Neighbours, who freely discourse of their Imperfections, and help to hand down Stories, which are to their Discredit; since 'tis a plain case, they often put themselves on relating such things for *certain*, of which they are so far from *knowing*, that they have rather reason to *question* the

the Truth? And tho' the things were really true; yet whilſt there is ſo much reaſon to doubt of it, they are unjuſt and unfaithful to their Neighbours in as many caſes as they contribute to the leſſening their Reputation by ſuch Relations.

But laſtly, tho it be more certain, that many Perſons are really guilty, both in *Words* and *Actions*, of things *Raſh*, *Fooliſh*, *Wicked*, *Prophane*, &c. Yet is it not warrantable, even for thoſe who moſt aſſuredly know the Truth, and were Witneſſes of ſuch Extravagancies, to make relations of them to Third Perſons; becauſe, notwithſtanding all this Truth and Certainty, 'tis poſſible, nay, often likely, they may be yet very unjuſt to the Parties concern'd in ſo doing. For how often happens it, if we may favourably judge of others by our ſelves, that Men ſpeak and do ſuch things as are really very fooliſh and indiſcreet, and commit great Overſights and Errors; and it may be, the Words are no ſooner ſpoke, or the things done, but on the firſt Reflection, they are vex'd, and, within their own Breaſts, reprehend themſelves, and wonder as much at their being thus overſeen, and condemn it as ſeverely as any of the

By-

By-ſtanders? Now for a Third Perſon, in theſe caſes, to go and whiſper, or tell openly to others, the Paſſages of ſuch Follies or Indiſcretions, is certainly moſt unjuſt; ſince, by theſe Relations, they imprint ſuch Characters and Idea's in the Minds of the Hearers, that in reality belong not to the Perſons of whom they ſpeak; but theſe are as certainly wrong'd in their Reputation, as a Man would be in his Features, who by ſome Accident turning his Mouth awry, or skrewing up his Noſe, ſhould have a Painter take him in that nick, and tranſmit his Picture to Poſterity under all thoſe Deformities.

And in other caſes, of Men that are notoriouſly ſcandalous, whoſe Follies are as publick as their Perſons, 'tis many times not without treſpaſſing againſt Juſtice, that their Crimes are brought into common Diſcourſes. For does not God often touch the Hearts of ſuch Sinners, and effectually withdraw them from all their Errors, ſo that there's nothing they deteſt more, than the Diſorders of their paſt Life? And now, for ſuch as have thus happily obey'd the Call of Heaven, and by a ſincere Repentance and Change of Life, made their Peace with God, is it not

not very unreaſonable and unjuſt, that their Crimes ſhould be yet kept alive among Men, and they expos'd, to their reproach, at Table-Entertainments and Viſits? God has forgot and forgiven their Sins, but not ſo their good Neighbours and Friends; but theſe ſtill ſhew them under all the Horror of Filth and Pollution, when in the ſight of God they are ſpotleſs, innocent and pure. And can this be done without the Imputation of a great Injuſtice, thus in fact, to reverſe the Sentence of Heaven, and to make them ſtill Criminals here, who are diſcharged above? And if this be the caſe of all thoſe, who revive in Company the Extravagancies of ſuch as are truly reclaim'd; is it not very dangerous at any time to enter upon this Subject of another's Follies? For who can tell, but the Party, however formerly guilty, has ſince repented? There may be Preſumptions, but hardly an aſſurance of the contrary; and may it not then eaſily be, that the Perſons thus reproach'd, may notwithſtanding all their paſt Crimes, by an hearty Repentance, be receiv'd into the Favour of God, and become Stars in Heaven; when thoſe who ſpeak Evil of them, for

their

their *Uncharitableneſs* and *Injuſtice* may find themſelves caſt out and be miſerable for ever?

And now, ſince *ſpeaking of our Neighbour's Failings* is in its ſelf ſo dangerous, that it cannot be eaſily ſeparated from Sin: For if the Subject of the Diſcourſe be any thing that is *Falſe* or *Doubtful*, it is a certain Offence againſt *Juſtice*, , and if it be *True*, it may be *Unjuſt* ſtill, but is unavoidably a Breach of Chriſtian Charity. Is it not a great Pity, that this ſort of Diſcourſe ſhould be ſo frequent amongſt the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, that there cannot be two or three together one half hour, but ten to one this is made a part of their Entertainment? And if this were the Weakneſs only of thoſe amongſt them, who give themſelves up to Liberty and Vice, and whoſe Life is a Scandal to their Profeſſion, it were not much to be admir'd: For what wonder is it, for thoſe who live ill, to ſpeak ill too; and to find them both in *Words* and *Actions* all of a piece? But the miſery is, that even thoſe who are of a more regular Life, who have an Horror of whatſoever ſeems Criminal, who war againſt Sin, and by the exerciſes of Piety ſeem ſeriouſly

ouſly to pretend to Heaven, are yet overtaken in this Snare, as freely begin and help on theſe Diſcourſes, as if there were nothing in them contrary to Piety and Religion. This is the Complaint of an Ancient Father long ago: *There are few*, ſays he, *that are free from this Vice, and that live ſo without Reproof, as to ſcruple the laying open their Neighbours Faults: So that even thoſe, who have an Abhorrence of other Sins, live in the open Practice of this.* And is not this a great Overſight and kind of Stupidity, that thoſe well inclin'd Souls, whoſe Thoughts and Deſires ſeem to be ſo fix'd on Heaven, as to be exact in almoſt every Duty, ſhould fail in this one? That their own Lives ſhould be almoſt blameleſs, and out of an itch of talking, to incur the Guilt of other Mens? To live in the way of Heaven, and talk themſelves to Hell, and be damn'd for their Neighbours Crimes, is certainly very ill management, and an Indiſcretion of a moſt fatal conſequence.

And while it is an Evil thus foul and impious, is it not again a matter both of pity and wonder, that it ſhould have inſinuated its ſelf ſo far into the Favour of that more pious and tender Sex, as to become

become fashionable in their most Friendly *Visits*, and to be one of the Topicks of their daily Conversation? To hear them discourse of Fashions and Dresses, of Jewels, Balls, Coaches, Watches, Air, Weather, *&c.* is a suitable and becoming Entertainment; but when they summon in absent Neighbours, and every one take their turn slinging at them, in discovering their Imperfections, in calling over their Follies and Vices, in telling their Hear-says and Guesses, in blackning their Reputation, and even murthering them in *Effigie*; here, methinks, they seem to forget themselves, and go beyond the Moderation reasonably to be expected from the tenderness of their Sex, and Piety of their Education.

For my part, when I consider a Man's Imperfections and Failings, they seem to me as so many *Sores* and *Wounds* in his Soul; and when I look on his *Vices* and *Sins*, what are they, but so much *Stench*, *Filth* and *Pollution*? Now is it not very unbecoming in this Sex, to be opening their Neighbours *Wounds* with their *Tongues*; to be licking at his Sores; and when they take so much care in perfuming themselves, to be so easie in turning up a Dunghil, to dwel in Sinks, and be raking in them so long, till they send a Stench up to Heaven? It would certainly be much more commendable in them, as likewise in all others, to take more after the *Good Samaritan* in the Gospel, and as often as, like him, they behold

behold their Neighbour wounded in his Reputation, to expreſs towards him a Chriſtian Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, and to ſtrive by all the Lenitives and healing methods, to cloſe up his Wounds: To put in a Word to excuſe his Weakneſs; to take off ſomething of the Guilt, by ſuppoſing ſome *Miſtake* and *Uncertainty* in the Relation; and if nothing elſe can be done, to divert the Company's Eyes at leaſt from ſo foul an Object, by ſtarting a more charitable Diſcourſe. But inſtead of this, to be diverted in adding to his Misfortunes, to find ſport in having a hand in his Sores, and taring open his Wounds, when, 'tis likely, they were almoſt skin'd over and heal'd, is a ſort of Spiritual Cruelty, not agreeable to any, but ſuch whoſe Nature is almoſt Barbarous, and who are near to *Cannibals* in Religion.

What then is to be done by thoſe, who deſire to avoid this Evil; for it ſeems to be ſo common in all Converſation, that a Man muſt decline all Company that deſires to eſcape its Contagion? 'Tis neceſſary in the firſt place, for every one to begin at home, and effectually to take care, to cut off all ſuch vicious Liberty in themſelves, ſo as to reſolve neither to begin, nor help on a Diſcourſe that reflects on any Neighbour. But becauſe a Guilt may be here contracted by *Hearing*, as well as *Speaking*, a diligent Care is to be us'd in this point, tho ſomething different according to the Quality and Circumſtances of the Perſons in whoſe Company we are, and who carry on ſuch Diſcourſes.

If they are ſo far our *Betters*, that to reprove them would ſavour of Arrogance or Raſhneſs, we ought to be careful not to take any Delight, nor

nor ſhew any Satisfaction in what they ſay, nor by Smiles to flatter them in their Calumnies; but rather to quit their Company, if it may be; or expreſs ſome Diſlike, at leaſt, at their Unneighbourly Entertainments. But if they are ſuch, with whom we may freely take the liberty of ſpeaking, what ſhould a Chriſtian do, on theſe occaſions, but become his Neighbours Advocate, make the Beſt Plea for him the Cauſe will bear, queſtion the Evidence, which however poſitive, is very often accompanied with Miſtakes or Paſſion? And if it be undeniable, bid thoſe who are Innocent fling the firſt Stone at him. Enquire who made us Judges over our Brethren, who are too often in the ſame Condemnation; and if we are not, by whoſe Favour is that? Turn the Diſcourſe out of Doors, expreſs a Zeal for thy Abſent Neighbour, as if it were thy own Concern, ever remembring how good thy Cauſe is, whilſt in this thou fighteſt the Battles of thy Lord; for it is he has ſaid it, Whatever is done to any of his little ones, is done to him. Oh, how were it to be wiſh'd, that Men would be careful to follow this Rule, *Never to ſpeak nor hear ill of their Neighbours!* How many Bleſſings might we expect upon ſuch a Reformation! How many Souls would be made happy! 'Tis by Charity we abide in God, and God in us. And as the Breach of Charity is a Sin againſt the Greateſt Precept, ſo it muſt certainly be the moſt Damning of all.

The next ſhall be *Of Immodeſty.*

Printed for *Sam. Crouch*, at the Corner of *Popes-head-Alley*, over againſt the *Royal-Exchange*, 1692.

THE
Friendly Monitor.
Of the SIN of
IMMODESTY.

'Tis a dangerous Vice, and requires a ſtrict Guard on all the Senſes for its Cure. The great Miſchiefs of Immodeſt Gazing, of Immodeſt Books and Pictures, of lewd Ballads, Plays and Romances. Immodeſt Diſcourſe and Filthy Songs turn Chriſtians into Devils; the Miſchiefs they do are irreparable, how difficult then muſt their Repentance be!

THis Vice in its whole extent, is ſo foul and contagious, that there's no *Thinking of* it without danger; *Writing of*

it is much more pernicious; and *Reading it*, would be accompanied with evils ſtill worſe, and more fatal to all the deſigns of Chriſtianity. And yet, whilſt it is become ſo Epidemical, that it has infected the greateſt part of mankind, methinks, it ought not to be paſs'd by Uncenſur'd, but rather deſerves the ſevereſt Condemnation, in as much as the Evils, it carries with it, are, above all Vices, more Dangerous and Univerſal. Since therefore it ſeems juſt, I ſhould oppoſe it, I think it ſafeſt to follow the Method of War, in regard of thoſe Strong Holds, which are fortified by nature and are inacceſſible, that is, block up all the Avenues and Paſſes, and ſo bring them to diſtreſs, without expoſing the Beſiegers to that hazard, which a nearer approach would neceſſarily oblige them to.

Thus, while I make War againſt this Vice, will I keep at a diſtance, for ſelf-preſervation; and make it my whole endeavour to poſſeſs my ſelf of all it Paſſes, that is, of all the *Senſes*, which are ſo many *Ways*, by which all Supplies and Succors are convey'd to it, for its Support and Strength; and if I can but ſecure theſe, this Evil muſt be weakn'd by degrees,

grees, and will infallibly fall of it self.

The first Pass or Sense I desire to secure, is that of the *Eyes*, which being the most Active of all the rest, and conveying Poyson into the Soul at the greatest distance, is that which calls for our first care. And therefore as *Job*, making a solemn Protestation of his Integrity in several Duties, sets the regulation of his *Eyes* in the front, *I have made a Covenant with my Eyes*, *Job.* 31. 1. So is it necessary for every Christian, that sincerely desires to be faithful to his Duty in this point, to set a guard upon his *Eyes*, and deny them much of that liberty they are too prone to take, to satisfie themselves, and that Corrupt Nature, which they serve. So that having duely consider'd the true End, for which Our Creator desig'nd these *Lights*, to *Guide*, *Direct*, *Inform*, *Instruct* us in all those Particulars, which are helpful towards our Spiritual or Temporal Good, we are after this to reflect on the infinite ways they may be abus'd, and made instrumental towards the bringing the Soul into disorder, confusion and darkness; and here a short view will serve to inform us, how many ways, and how often it is necessary to apply the first Maxim of our

Lord, *Of denying our ſelves*, to this one Senſe of our Eyes, eſpecially in regard of this evil, which is our preſent Subject. For is not our Infirmity ſuch, that where-ever we go, whether for Converſation, Company, Diverſion, nay for Buſineſs and Devotion too, whereſoever we walk, we ever ſtand expos'd, and are under a neceſſity of keeping a ſtrict Watch upon this Senſe, for the preſervation of that interior Peace, which is the life of the Soul? And is it not the want of this care, that lays the Heart open to many dangerous Aſſaults of the Enemy, whereby ſo much of the World and its vain Delights creep in, as to leave but little room for Vertue and Religion, nay even to drive God quite out from thence? So that as a ſmall Neglect in this point ſeldom fails of filling the Soul with Diſturbance and Diſtraction, ſo 'tis moſt certain, the indulging of any Liberty in this kind, cannot end but in Vice.

Hence they are ſeverely to be condemn'd, who whether in *Company*, or *Walking the Streets*, allow themſelves the Liberty of *fixing their Eyes* on every one they meet, that carries with them, either in

in their Face or Dreſs, any thing of Comelineſs or Beauty: And as many as they out-walk, that ſhew any thing of agreeableneſs in their Meen, cannot paſs them by without *turning back* and ſtaring them in the Face, to their own Confuſion, in the practice of ſuch a *Licentious Confidence*; and the Scandal of the By-Standers, who ſee them wilfully expoſing themſelves to what St. *Paul* has mark'd out as Unbecoming and Infamous in a Chriſtian, that is, the *Luſt of the Eyes.*

All theſe, I ſay, are ſeverely to be condemn'd: For ſince the condition of Man, in order to Eternity and Salvation, by the Divine appointment, is ſo difficult, and the Way ſo narrow, that it requires all the Diligence and Care a man can poſſibly uſe; and having done his beſt, is ſtill to go on with *Fear and Trembling*; is it not a ſtrange Stupidity and Madneſs, to ſee Men making the Way ſtill narrower, induſtriouſly encreaſing to themſelves new Difficulties, wilfully putting themſelves into innumerable Hazards, and taking pains to ſeek ſtill more Enemies, when, if the truth were known, they have already more than they know how to maſter? Are not the Occaſions of Evil,

that are unavoidable, too many, that Men ſhould thus look for more? And is not the Devil buſy enough in his Snares, that Men ſhould thus turn Devils to themſelves, and become their own Tempters? Well may Satan reſt and not buſy himſelf with theſe; for they are forward enough to get his work done to his hand, and ſeem reſolv'd to have it all of their own doing: Why ſhould they elſe take up this ill Cuſtom, ſo often ſtop and put themſelves into thoſe dangers, which otherwiſe are paſſing by them? Whoever therefore deſires ſeriouſly to ſecure himſelf againſt this Vice or maſter it, muſt take care to keep ſuch a ſtrict Guard on his *Eyes*, as, whether in *Street* or *Company*, to deny them this dangerous Liberty; it being, for the moſt part, by theſe Windows that Sin and Death enter into the Soul.

There is ſtill a farther care neceſſary for this Senſe, and that is, the avoiding all Immodeſt *Books*, *Pictures* or *Shews*; theſe being as ſo many Snares of the Devil, by which Innocence is Corrupted, evil Inclinations are ſtrengthn'd and fed, and the heart of man inflam'd with the fire of Hell: So that this Enemy of mankind

kind cannot desire to be securer of any prey, than to see Men bite at any of these Baits. For is it not evident, that, whosoever purposely reads any of these Books, is studying the black Art, is improving himself in the Science of Wickedness, becomes the Devils Scholar, and, under his Discipline, is learning to make war against Heaven? Is it not by such like *Pictures* and *Shews*, the Thoughts are possess'd with evil, the Heart's carried into all that is foul and sinful, and takes delight in what it is strictly bound to abominate and detest? And while they are thus pernicious, ought it not to be every body's care that is in love with Virtue, wholly to avoid them, as the Incentives to all sort of Uncleanness? And for this end, would not all Masters of Families discharge a great Duty, in having a watchful Eye over all under their care, and not to permit amongst them such Books or Pictures, but severely to chastise those, who shall be found in this point delinquent? For whilst they pretend to Christian Education, and to be the Children of God, ought not they to be punish'd, as false to their Principles, who, by any of these Ways, professedly hold a cor-

reſpondence with the Devil? And were it not to be wiſh'd, that every Chriſtian Government would ſo far take notice of this Evil, as by Penalties, to endeavour the reforming of as much of it as is Publick? For is it not a ſhame, that filthy and immodeſt Prints and Pictures ſhould be permitted to be hung up on Walls, and there publickly expos'd for ſale; where they are an Offence to the Good, corrupt the Innocent, and are a Snare to the Unwary? where they ſerve to teach *Children* and *Youth* to be *Men* in Wickedneſs betimes, and give them an early knowledge of what is ever learned too ſoon? Is it not pity, that theſe ſort of Books too ſhould be allow'd which are thus inſtructive in Sin, and teach that Science, which every Good Body deſires to unlearn? Me-thinks, when I conſider, that we are Subjects of God, as well as of our King, theſe Books, which contain ſo much Treaſon againſt Heaven, ſhould be with as much care ſuppres'd, as Libels againſt the Government; ſince Chriſtianity ought no more to tolerate theſe deſigns againſt Heaven, than Loyalty do's againſt the State. And 'twere to be wiſh'd, that thoſe, who throughout Chriſtendom, ſuperintend

perintend the ſpiritual Affairs, would ſo far ſtand up for Vertue, and maintain its Rights, as not to ſee it overthrown by the permiſſion of ſuch Contraband Goods as theſe. But however this be, 'tis certain, as many as trade in them, ought to look on themſelves no better than the Devil's Factors; for tho' they get ſo much *per Cent* in their Sale, yet the *Principal Gain* is for Hell, whether they help to pack off more Souls 'tis likely than they have Pence come to their ſhare.

But of this kind of Merchandiſe, I think, there's none worſe, than that, which is *Book and Picture* all in one, *lewd Ballads*, I mean, which, being every body's Mony, ſeems contriv'd on purpoſe to convey filth into every Corner, to teach Children to be Vicious, as ſoon as they can read, and furniſh every Servant that has but an Half-penny to ſpare, with Wickedneſs enough to become chargeable to their Maſters, and in the end, to ruin themſelves. And that none may be depriv'd of this knowledge, for want of Mony, 'tis but ſtanding one half hour under a Wall, and they may read half a dozen for nothing; nay, and for thoſe too that cannot read, they have ill luck if they

they meet not ſome of theſe in their walks, ſet off with an excellent New Tune, where they have Muſick into the bargain, to recommend and help down the Poyſon. Now to me it ſeems a thing altogether unwarrantable, that when two or three debauched Rimers have, over a Pot, botch'd up a filthy Song, which without *Wit* or *Senſe*, is juſt fitted to pleaſe nothing above the Beaſt in Man, they ſhould be permitted to publiſh theſe their Peſtiferous Thoughts in Print and Picture, and have them paſs for Current, as if *enter'd according to order*; when they are fit to appear no where, but in the region of Darkneſs, to feed that Fire, which will be their Torment, who prepare ſuch Fuel: And then for others of the ſame leaven, to go about ſtreets and tune out theſe infernal Lays in the midſt of unthinking Crowds and ſet up theſe Walking Bawdy-houſes at every Corner, nay and under the very Church Walls too, in defiance of that Goſpel, which is there preach'd, as if they meant nothing leſs than to undo all the Sunday Lectures with a Song, is a thing intolerable, and ſo oppoſite to all Religion and Goodneſs, that till the Publick ſhall think fit to expreſs its Zeal againſt

gainſt it, 'tis but neceſſary every private Perſon ſhould decline all ſuch Aſſemblies, where there's no approaching but at the expence of Modeſty and Shame, and the Scandal of all that are Good, who know, that after all the Sport and Noiſe, there's nothing elſe meant, but the Cheap Invitation of, *Who'll learn to go to Hell for a Halfpenny?*

There's too much of this ſort of Infection too in *Romances* and *Plays*, tho' ſet off here in a much better Dreſs, which renders them ſtill the more dangerous in as much as thoſe Ingenious Covers of Wit, with which the Poyſon is there gilded, helps to carry it down with more eaſe and delight, and to ſink it ſo deep in the Soul, that 'tis not in the power of time to work it out, or make it be forgotten. And 'tis theſe Immodeſt Sprinklings, theſe Indecent Suggeſtions, which makes theſe Entertainments, that would otherwiſe be in ſome ſort juſtifiable, to be many times prejudicial to Vertuous Inclinations, to be the Corruption of Youth, and to caſt ſuch ill Seed in the Minds of the moſt reſerv'd, that the Fruit it brings forth, I fear is not ſo very Chriſtian as it ſhould be, or as ſome pretend, who ſay, they go to

to those Diversions to be instructed in *Goodness* and *Vertue*: For certainly their *Eyes* and *Ears* must be very great *Chymists*, so entirely to separate the Good from the Evil, as to let none of the Dross and Filth go down with what is pure and Spirit, and prevent all the good Effects of it in the Soul. But however they may be skill'd in this, I cannot but think, if they sincerely desire their own Good, they might learn much more of this at home, with a Good Book in a Corner, at a cheaper rate, and with more security. But what, must no Diversion then of a Play be allow'd to Younger People, and others that have leisure? They must expect many clamouring Adversaries, that answer this in the Negative. But this Caution then I give, that they be careful to choose such as are Innocent, and go but seldom: For, believe me, those that go to all Plays indifferently, and grow fond of this Entertainment, must needs run a great hazard of defiling all that is good within them, and betray in themselves a very *Corrupt and Idle Inclination*, who can find no better Employment than living in a Play-house. And I can think but little better of those who delight in no other

Books,

Books, but in reading *Plays* and *Romances*; for beſides this particular Miſchief, we here ſpeak of, they are apt to make vain, airy and giddy Brains, put people upon extravagancies, keep Youth from ever ſetling, and prepares them for Dreaming, as long as they live.

Hitherto as to the *Eyes*; but after this, there is ſtill a great care to be us'd in the Government of the *Tongue*, in order to preſerve the Soul Pure and Undefil'd; ſo that whoever deſires to make one of that Bleſſed Number of the *Clean of heart*, muſt, with *David*, ſet a Guard over his Lips, and by no means ſuffer any *Indecent* or *Immodeſt* Word to come out of his Mouth. This is the Command of St. *Paul*, who enjoyns all thoſe, that think of learning Chriſt, *To let no Corrupt Communication proceed out of their Mouths*, and that *Uncleanneſs be not once nam'd amongſt them*, *Epheſ.* 4. 29. 8. 3. This he repeats again *Coloſſ.* 3. 8. Where his Command is, *Put off Anger, Wrath, Malice, Blaſphemy, Filthy Communication out of your Mouth.* Is it not plain then, that if this be one of the Conditions requir'd for the laying aſide Infidelity and becoming a Chriſtian, that whoever permits in himſelf, the habit

bit of *Corrupt Communication*, of *Immodest Discourse*, or even *Naming what is Filthy*, is so much of an Infidel still, so far an Enemy to Christ, instead of being a Christian?

And is it not most surprizing then, to see how frequent this is amongst those, that profess this Name; most abominable to hear them, without any respect to God's Command or regard to their Souls, talking like Heathens, like Beasts, nay like Evil Spirits; for what else is this, but the Language of Hell, the Communication of Devils? And who art thou, Christian, that pretendest to serve thy God, and art bound by his Law, to speak nothing but to Edification, and art so often, amongst thy Companions, beginning and helping on these *filthy Discourses*, as if thy business were, not to serve and honour, but to injure and provoke thy God? For tell me, if thou wert a Fiend, what couldst thou do more? Thou art by this, a Contemner of thy Maker, an Enemy to thy own Soul, a Promoter of Wickedness and a Tempter of the Brethren: And what beyond this, canst thou have more of a Devil, but his Punishment? And canst thou want this long, who art thus treasuring up to thy self Anger in the day of wrath? Deceive not therefore thy self with the Name of *Religion*, be not flatter'd with thy *Praying* or *good Designs*; but either *effectually* take care to amend this evil, or believe not thy self to be a Christian.

And is he any better, who, tho' he will not talk smuttily, yet is ever ready with a *filthy Song*, to make sport amongst his Friends? His Religion may be Good, but he's certainly no

better

better than a *Judas*, who thus betrays the Cause of his Master, who raises up the Devil in as many hearts as there are Hearers, and turns a Friendly and Christian Entertainment into a *Gnostick* Meeting or Feast of *Priapus*. And however this sort of men may please themselves, in the many Smiles they raise and the Diversion they give the Company; yet if they would but once seriously consider the part they act, and the severity of that Judgment, which will one day put a long Period to all their Merriment, the Scene, I think, would soon be chang'd, and they be willing to make choise of an Innocent Sobriety, rather than go on in the delusion of this Brutish Mirth and debauch'd Madness. For are not they the most miserable of all Sinners; their Crime being such, as to render all the means of Reconciliation and Repentance in some manner to them impossible? For suppose they endeavour to amend and repent of this their *Personal Fault*, and now begin to hope all is well; what will their condition be, when at the hour of Death shall be laid before them, all the Sins they have caus'd, whether by *Immodest Discourse* or *Songs*, in others; when they shall see many Souls, already in the Torments of Hell, that have been condemn'd to those Pains, for Crimes which they have occasion'd in them? O God, what Confusion and Despair will begin to Seize at that time, when they shall find their Repentance so far short of their Sins? How will they then think themselves unfit for Heaven, by whom so many burn in Hell? Deliver, O Lord, all Christians from this detestable Vice, and teach those that

that are guilty of it, not to truſt to an imperfect Repentance.

Beſides this, there is a Reſtraint to be had on the other Senſes: On the *Hearing*, ſo as not to bear with any ſort of *Immodeſt Talk* or *Songs*; but either openly to divert or ſilence it, or, at the leaſt, withdraw from ſuch wicked Company: On the *Hands*, ſo as not to allow them the leaſt Liberty of any thing that has but the *Shew of Evil*, or can poſſibly be ſuſpected of *Indecency*. And here, not to think of what is in private, is there not want of a great Reformation as to the Publick; this ſort of *Impudence* being grown ſo Common, that 'tis not ſafe for *Modeſty* and *Vertue* to appear abroad without a Guard, to defend them from the Inſolencies and Abuſes of thoſe Libertines, who walk the Streets in the Spirits of the Devil, going about like him and ſeeking whom they may devour?

Thus if all the *Senſes* were kept in order, and the *Phancy* or *Imagination* not permitted to entertain any thing of Evil, there might be ſome hopes of triumphing over this Vice of Impurity, which at preſent, to the ſhame of Chriſtendom, has got ſuch Poſſeſſion, that it abounds both in *Slaves* and *Martyrs* too; dragging ſome through infinite hardſhips, for its Support and Maintenance; and drawing others into ſuch *Filthy Diſeaſes* and *Torments*, as, it may be, exceed the Invention of the greateſt Tyrants; and where can theſe Torments end but in others Eternal? Thus dear pay ſome for Damnation. Oh, that men would ſeriouſly think, and not loſe their Souls, for the ſatisfaction of living like Beaſts!

FINIS.